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ABSTRACT

Views on the partnership of government and higher education and experiences with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) are presented by the former governor of Florida and former chairman of SREB. SREB has encouraged long-range statewide planning and has brought together legislators, governors, educators, and other public leaders seeking and finding directions for the future of colleges and universities. In the early sixties SREB encouraged that the region assess its needs and objectives by national standards of quality and opportunity, and not by sectional benchmarks; following this advice may have been the most important single factor in the region's educational progress. In 1976 SREB identified the critical concerns demanding regional attention in the future. In the South, where there is not the enormous private endowment support of some other regions, the alliance of higher education and government has been important. The following issues are addressed: expanding educational opportunities at the college level, the mutual responsibilities of government and higher education in solving societal problems, academic freedom, competencies of college graduates, public school competency testing, educational finance, counterproductive controversies involving trends toward larger government and increasing checks and balances, and faculty collective bargaining. A list of nine priorities for postsecondary education in the South, issued by SREB in 1976, is included. (SW)

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Higher Education and Government: Mutual Expectations and Responsibilities

[*Note: This edition of* **Regional Spotlight** *departs from its usual format to reproduce a major excerpt from an address delivered by former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins at the 30th anniversary meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board in Key Biscayne, Florida, on June 7, 1978.*]

The central reason this Southern interstate effort has been so effective is its insistence upon, and loyalty to, the concept of a partnership of government and higher education leadership. In reflecting on the mutual expectations and responsibilities of higher education and government, I must comment briefly on my experience with our interstate compact which for 30 years has been reinforcing this two-way relationship.

My association with SREB began in the fall of 1954 when, as a state senator, I participated in its third annual Legislative Work Conference in Houston. One of the speakers, I recall, made a dramatic presentation in which he predicted the great growth needs just ahead for improvements in higher education in our region. He stirred all of us, and I think it is quite fitting that during this 30th anniversary meeting that same man, John Folger, who later served for some years as a staff member of SREB, will be reviewing the highlights of the South's tremendous achievements in higher education which followed, and which, in large measure, he foresaw.

That Houston conference also spotlighted Florida for its efforts to plan for the phenomenal growth that was on the horizon for all levels of education. Dr. A. J. Brumbaugh, who directed the Council for the Study of Higher Education in Florida, and who later was to join the SREB staff, emphasized to the legislators in attendance that simply by counting existing enrollments in our elementary and high schools, we could see the tide of children coming in. He directed attention to the necessity to move forward quickly and effectively to expand our higher education competence, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Long-Range Statewide Planning

Following these presentations, the conference voted unanimously to urge each state in the region to begin a study of its future needs in higher education. That was not the first time, nor was it the last, that a forum held under SREB auspices helped us in Florida to focus on objectives through long-range statewide planning.

At a number of critical junctures in the past 30 years, SREB has brought together legislators, governors, educators and other public leaders seeking and finding directions for the

After a career in the Florida House and Senate, LeRoy Collins served as governor of Florida from 1955 to 1961. Governor Collins was chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board from 1955 to 1957 and a member of the 1961 SREB Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South. While governor of Florida, he was chairman of both the Southern Governors' Conference and the National Governors' Conference. After leaving office in 1961, he became president of the National Association of Broadcasters, and in 1964 was appointed by President Johnson to be director of the Community Relations Service and later to be undersecretary of Commerce. Most recently, he has served on the Florida Constitution Revision Commission.

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future of our colleges and universities. The key to the Board's continued success over the years has been that these deliberations have melded the thinking and cooperation of all who have shared responsibility for leadership in the decision-making process.

My experience with SREB greatly broadened while serving as governor from 1955-1961. I then became one of our state's members of the first interstate compact to advance higher education, and the next summer I was honored by election to the chairmanship of SREB, an office I held through the summer of 1957. During that period I gained a greater appreciation for the good sense represented by the regional approach to common problems. I am not so sure that I stirred SREB, but it sure stirred me, and I became more deeply concerned about improving the utility of our own institutional and state-level research in higher education. SREB was extremely helpful to us at this point through a foundation-supported program of information services and consultation.

"Perhaps the most fundamental contribution of this goals commission was its insistence ... that the region assess its needs and objectives by national standards of quality and opportunity, and not by sectional benchmarks."

Regional Goals for Higher Education

After leaving the governor's office in the first days of 1961, I was privileged to serve as a member of SREB's special Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South. Our mission was to draw up an agenda for the improvement and advancement of our colleges and universities, with common directions to achieve a better future for the entire region. The five basic goals which came from this effort are, I believe, still valid, and many of the steps which the commission suggested for achieving them have been taken over the past decade and a half by our states.

Perhaps the most fundamental contribution of this goals commission was its insistence, at a very difficult time in our history, that the region assess its needs and objectives by national standards of quality and opportunity, and not by sectional benchmarks. In the years since the goals were enunciated, the efforts to adhere to such national standards may well have been the most important single factor in our educational progress.

Coming to more modern times, in 1976 SREB took another step, a logical one, to identify the critical concerns demanding regional attention in the future. With the advice and assistance of members of the Board, its Legislative Advisory Council, institutional leaders, and other individuals and panels, SREB issued a position statement on *Priorities for Postsecondary Education in the South*. I understand that the nine priorities defined in that document have assisted in directing state and regional planning attention to matters of critical import to the future of higher education.

The combination of focusing attention on long-range issues in higher education, and assisting in the solution of day-to-day problems, is obviously one reason that SREB has achieved the success for which we all have every reason to take pride on this anniversary.

In the South particularly, where there is not the enormous private endowment support of some other regions, the future of higher education has had to be the concern of government; and the future of government has had to be the concern of higher education. What are some of the elements of this interdependence?

Expanding Opportunity

First, I believe we must insist that government and higher education each provide the fullest opportunity for all citizens to participate. Our record on this point has not been the best, but the recent progress we have made in the South has been rapid and sure. In government, the poll tax and "literacy tests" for voting are gone. Courthouse politics and backroom deals have increasingly given way to what we in Florida call "government in the sunshine." Apportionment changes in local and state government units are making it possible for persons of all ethnic and racial backgrounds not only to vote, but to be elected.

In Florida our recent constitution revision

commission also has called for single member legislative districting. This action, if approved by the people, seems certain to result in more minority members in our state legislature. Some of our other Southern states are far ahead of us in this reform.

In higher education, money—or rather lack of it—is no longer an insurmountable obstacle keeping ambitious students who are poor out of college. Student choice of a college or university for undergraduate training is now just that, and is no longer a matter of assignment for reasons of race or color. Today, a black high school graduate is increasingly as likely to attend college as his white counterpart; and higher education of the few has been replaced by a commitment to provide education beyond high school for all who can benefit from it.

This has become symbolized by our great community college programs, which I think have been the single most important institutional development in public education in our lifetime. There is nothing which has given me greater pride from my service as governor than that, in those years, we built and put in operation 23 community colleges throughout Florida.

I don't suggest that either government or higher education has solved all its opportunity problems. While minorities are well represented on voter registration rolls, they are still underrepresented in city halls and legislative chambers. Our university graduate programs, faculties and administrations still have to do more in fully including minorities, but I am convinced that continued progress on this front is bound to come.

Priorities for Postsecondary Education in the South

☐ **Statewide planning in postsecondary education must be assigned a high priority. Improvement of the planning and decision-making process at both the institutional and the state levels is essential.**

☐ **The provision of postsecondary opportunities for minority and ethnic groups remains a major priority for the region. State efforts to expand opportunity should be an integral part of state planning to serve the diverse needs of a pluralistic society for education beyond the high school.**

☐ **A priority of major importance should be an affirmative redefinition of the purpose, meaning, and value of baccalaureate education with special attention to an appropriate balance of the academic disciplines with the career preparation and personal development of students.**

☐ **Education and training for employment is a crucial need for high school graduates in the South. Specific training programs below the baccalaureate should remain a primary function of two-year colleges, vocational-technical schools, and proprietary schools, but the relationship between education and employment requires careful attention at all levels of postsecondary education.**

☐ **Graduate and professional education of high quality must remain a priority of particular importance in the South, with special concern both for the improved representation of women and minorities and for selective retrenchment in overexpanded fields.**

☐ **Special consideration should be given to non-traditional alternatives for learning at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels. Program regulations and funding procedures should be designed to implement these options.**

☐ **The academic community has within its own ranks the potential for self-generated reform. That reform should be based on a systematic assessment of educational outcomes and impact, and should lead to improved faculty performance and productivity.**

☐ **A crucial priority for postsecondary education is adequate, equitable, and efficient funding. The adequacy of funding must be balanced with an equitable sharing of education costs, efficient use of financial resources, and access to postsecondary education for all who can benefit.**

☐ **The talents and resources of postsecondary institutions and of universities in particular should be applied more directly and more effectively to major problems facing state governments.**

Reprinted from *Priorities for Postsecondary Education in the South*—a position statement by the Southern Regional Education Board, 1976.

Mutual Expectations and Responsibilities

"Government...

...should expect higher education to set priorities and not seek to establish and fund every program imaginable to the academic mind."

...should also expect higher education to make some fundamental adjustments if enrollments decrease and the demand for doctoral degrees drops."

"Higher education...

...should expect government to have as its goal a continuity of reasonable funding and not expect institutions to operate on a feast and famine cycle."

...and the public should expect from government leaders a fair tax system consistent with the state's resources, and this doesn't necessarily mean the lowest possible tax system."

Societal Problem-Solving

Government and higher education have mutual expectations and responsibilities in tackling problems in our society.

We are frustrated by problems in our welfare system, our nation's struggle with alcohol and drugs, the declining stability of the home and family in American life, crime, and inflation. These are problems we expect our governments to face directly, and for higher education to influence strongly.

Institutionally higher education cannot concoct answers to all of society's problems; perhaps we thought it could in those buoyant years following Sputnik. While indispensable to a free society, higher education is not a panacea. However, higher education does have a responsibility to assist government in addressing problems of our complex world, as SREB noted with strong emphasis in its recent priorities statement.

In areas of science and technology, that helping link is clear. University graduates and faculty researchers are helping to clean up our water and air, responding to our changing energy needs, increasing food production, improving health, and prolonging life itself.

In terms of other human services the link is also there, but meeting needs related primarily to attitudes and individual personal development is not so easily described or measured. Yet, it is in this area of personal development that the university's strength is, in fact, most pervasive and indispensable.

Academic Freedom

While government can expect higher education to help address society's problems, higher education can expect government to permit, and in fact encourage, the pursuit of truth wherever it leads. This is higher education's underpinning of integrity. In the abstract we all can support academic freedom, the pursuit of truth and knowledge, freedom of inquiry. But in a nation divided on issues of abortion, the death penalty, biogenetic research and the uses of nuclear power, the issues of free inquiry can quickly become more concrete than abstract.

These and other equally controversial issues will continue to be debated on our college campuses, and no matter how great the temptation of government to bring the majority will of the moment to bear on the academic world, this would be wrong. In this regard our universities play a role that no other institution can, and regardless of how irritated we may be sometimes with distasteful happenings on a university campus, trying to control those activities through government coercion would be a mistake, unless, of course, the activities were in fact unlawful.

Competencies of College Graduates

The public through its government has good reason to expect the higher education

experience to produce graduates having certain abilities—beyond that of the three R's, I would quickly add. The college experience should develop the ability for persons to make discerning judgments as citizens. They should be seekers of truth and beauty and courage. They should be able to reason and think critically and to express well their thoughts. The college experience should give each graduate broadened perspectives. They should gain a firm moral sensibility and appreciation for the human values of mutual respect, cooperation, and integrity. They should also have a thorough knowledge of our form of government, know the meaning of public trust, and the strengths and weaknesses of our legal and economic systems. They should understand the stimulation of achieving, and the need for strong motivation as they pursue their opportunities.

The time has come for higher education to scrutinize its undergraduate degree programs to make sure that they are meeting these expectations of society, and I am glad to see that SREB has called for such affirmative redefinition of baccalaureate education in its statement on future priorities.

Public School Competency Testing

One cannot speak about the proficiency which college graduates should have without reflecting on the current demand for competence testing in our public schools. Certainly the public should expect high school graduates to have mastered the basic tools of reading and writing and arithmetic. It is even more important that teachers who are trained for positions in our schools should have mastered these skills. But people come to bloom intellectually at different times and under different circumstances, and certainly one test score derived at one particular time may not in itself be a definitive and sufficiently reliable measure in limiting a student's future opportunities, though this does occur in some European and Asian nations.

Shouldn't we be exploring the vital question of testing on a far broader basis than arguing about the merits and limitations of a twelfth grade test alone? Why not make it a continuing process from grade 1 through 12?

Former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins is shown here addressing a dinner at the 30th anniversary meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board on June 7, 1978, in Key Biscayne, Florida.

Total College Enrollment as a Percent of Population 18-24, By Sex, 1951-1986

	MEN			WOMEN		
Year	U.S.	South	South as a Percent of U.S.	U.S.	South	South as a Percent of U.S.
1951	19%	12%	69%	9%	7%	78%
1960	29	21	70	17	13	77
1970	44	33	74	30	23	78
1976	42	35	82	36	31	86
1986 [a]	40-45	36-40	90	40-45	36-40	90

[a] These are projections which assume sex differences in college enrollment rates will disappear by 1986, and that Southern ratios of enrollment to population will be 90 percent of national figures by 1986.

Source: U.S. Office of Education, *Fall Enrollment*. U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1950, 60, 70 and Current Population Report Series P-25 No. 626.

Reprinted from *The South's Commitment to Higher Education: Progress and Prospects* by John K. Folger—one of a series of reports commissioned for the 30th anniversary meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board, 1978.

(I think our Department of Education in Florida is looking in this direction.) Testing is not an end. It is a means for determining more effectively where needs for additional assistance do or do not exist. So, follow-up questions, such as what can or should we do to assist students to overcome the deficiencies disclosed, are inescapable. And we will leave the job undone unless we follow up by providing that assistance where it is in fact needed.

Fiscal Responsibilities

Finance is another area of mutual expectations and responsibilities for government and higher education. Government should expect higher education institutions to be managed efficiently, recognizing that efficiency can be manifested in different ways in different social institutions.

Government has every right to expect higher education to be accountable, both in terms of the normal, good business, financial accounting procedures, and in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. Government should expect higher education to set priorities and not seek to establish and fund every program imaginable to the academic mind. Government should also expect higher education to make some fundamental adjustments if enrollments decrease and the demand for doctoral degrees drops.

"... regardless of how irritated we may be sometimes with distasteful happenings on a university campus, trying to control those activities through government coercion would be a mistake..."

But now let's turn that coin over.

Higher education should expect government to have as its goal a continuity of reasonable funding and not expect institutions to operate well on a feast and famine cycle. Higher education and the public should expect from government leaders a fair tax system consistent with the state's resources, and this doesn't necessarily mean the lowest possible tax system.

In the total appropriations program of government there is an increasing need for legislators to develop a stronger ability, and to demonstrate a firmer will, to set priorities based upon the importance of need. This will not come easily. It has been so much simpler for government to cling to the institutional concept. Once a program has been set in motion, there has followed an almost automatic justification for increases year by year to make it bigger and better. There are forces now working, such as zero budgeting, performance auditing, and sunset laws, through which government can better understand who deserves what, based upon the priority of serving the public interest. Higher education should accept this as wholesome, and should gear up to make a strong case for deserving a high priority status in such a system.

Counterproductive Controversies

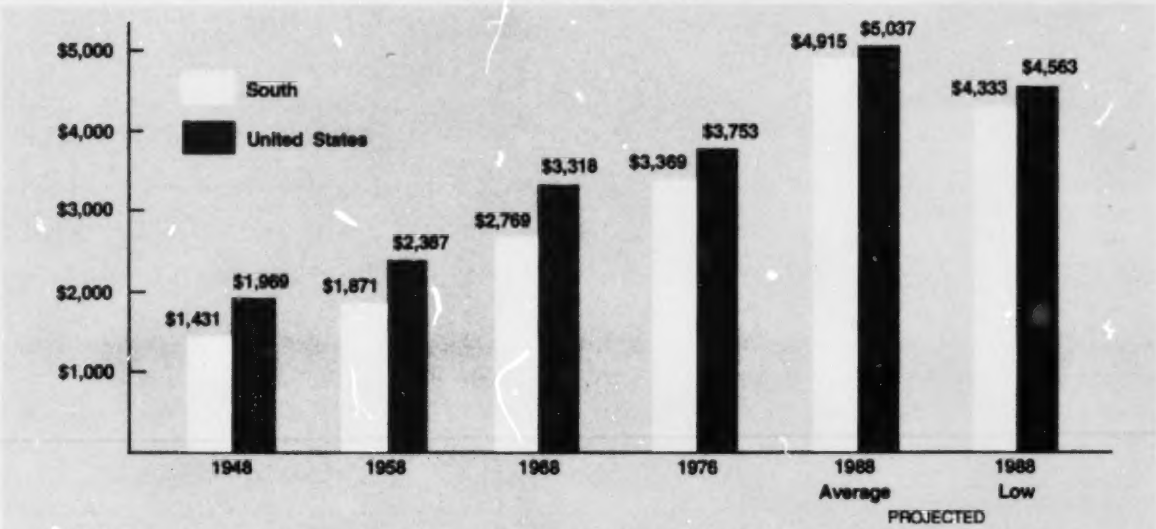
In recent years, the trend in government generally has been to add larger and larger, and layer upon layer, of staff in providing more and more government services and more and more checks and balances in our three branch systems. At times and places this has been carried to extremes that have proved counterproductive for reasons other than the indefensible tax burden and bad economics of it.

Staff people have an urge to be adversarial, often to justify the need for their own survival and the availability of slots for their assistants. This is a part of the workings of bureaucracy. But common goals can never be accomplished without a mutuality of both interest and desire. There is no place for arrogance from any source. Conflicting views and adversarial efforts, when constructive, are vital to the democratic process, but they can become of far more hurt than help when irresponsible, duplicative, and unnecessary.

What worries me too is that programs, with the enormously increased state budgets over recent years, are becoming over-systematized and mechanized. In the process we seem to be achieving a greater measure of detachment and insulation between those who make policy, and those who have the responsibility to execute it. To the structuralist, this may make sense, but actually it erodes basic human val-

Per Capita Personal Income, South and United States, 1948-88

(In Constant 1967 Dollars)



Reprinted from *The South's Commitment to Higher Education: Progress and Prospects* by John K. Folger—one of a series of reports commissioned for the 30th anniversary of the Southern Regional Education Board, 1978.

Source: SREB adaptation from *The Survey of Current Business*, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.

ues, causing serious losses in performance. Government must be administered by humane, compassionate, highly competent people whose strongest motivation is the quality of the job that gets done in the service of the public interest. It cannot be successfully administered by people whose aims or concerns are conditioned almost wholly to serving their own welfare, and pride in their organization charts.

Faculty Collective Bargaining

I would like to reflect briefly tonight on a development in Florida higher education management that I think merits watching.

I refer to the relationships between management and labor. These are terms that in the past have been reserved for industry. But no longer is this so. University faculty and other personnel in today's society face the same problems as other working segments of our social structure—job security, retirement, health insurance, and other benefits as well as wages and salaries.

The management of a university has become a complex procedure, in many aspects only remotely related to instruction. There are many parallels with corporate management. With increasing support from federal agencies and philanthropy, with large enrollments, and with the task of management of social security, retirement funds, and the expanding array of federal regulations, the administration and faculty have moved into employer-employee relations quite different from earlier academic traditions. The advent of collective bargaining has come to the campus, perhaps still in embryo form, but it has come nevertheless.

However, a university differs in many respects from an industry or a corporation. It is responsible to the public, whether that public is the state or an independent constituency. It provides services to a society which is constantly changing its manpower needs and priorities. Its bottom line does not show profit or loss in dollar terms. And, it operates on financial support which has its limits, both from public and private sources.

Finding a Meeting Ground

We must resolve new problems in the field of collective bargaining, and it is vital that we do so with well-defined common goals and expectations which hold the university to its unique place in our social structure. The meeting ground must be in a full light of the realities—the purposes of the university, the ever-changing educational requirements of the society, the realities of financial support available, and a recognition of the difference between stable, continuing support and spe-

cial grants for programs of limited duration, whether in research or in instruction. Feather-bedding in the academic world is, in the long run, as self-defeating in universities as in railroads.

There is too much at stake for all of us—academic people, legislators, students, or just plain citizens—to have educational planning dominated by such a management-labor controversy.

Sooner or later, all the institutions under the SREB aegis will be directly involved in controversy over collective bargaining. SREB has recognized this. In three recent legislative work conferences the issues have been featured in discussions. I think it is important that out of this sharing of ideas, planning for the common good will emerge.

In closing, I would like to recall again the days when we were working on the SREB Goals Commission program. We had many different opinions as to the reality of the present as well as prospects for the future then, as now. But we kept working at it until we did overcome adversarial positions to agree on a set of common goals that we felt would support a bootstrap operation in higher education in our Southland. Those goals we came to agree on were important to the South in the 1960's. I think they will be important in the 1980's because they say a lot about mutual responsibilities and expectations of government and higher education. Let me read them and commend them to you. They are:

- ☐ To provide every individual with opportunities for maximum development of his or her abilities;
- ☐ To produce citizens responsive to the social, economic, and political needs of the time;
- ☐ To achieve excellence in teaching, scholarship, and research;
- ☐ To accelerate the economic progress of the Southern region through education and research;
- ☐ To guide the region in solving social problems created by population changes, racial differences, urbanization and technological growth.

I submit that these principles are as right today as they were then. They just need a little polish to make them shine better, and a favorable disposition to put them to best use.

It is traditional with journalists to end a story with the symbol 30.

SREB is 30 years old, but the 30 we honor tonight does not mark an end. In fact the most singular thing about SREB on this birthday is that we are looking for new beginnings, new hope, new determination, to make the years ahead the most productive in progress of any we have ever known. ■

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